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San Antonio Sailors Represent Navy At River Parade

BY VJOHNSON – MAY 22, 2014
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San Antonio Sailors and the Navy Band's Washington, DC-based contemporary ensemble, the "Cruisers," on board the U.S. Navy float for the third annual Armed Forces Day River Parade May 17. (Photo courtesy of Navy Medicine Education and Training Command)

Sailors from several of the 11 Navy and Navy Medicine commands and detachments in the San Antonio area joined the Navy Band's Washington, DC-based contemporary ensemble, the "Cruisers," on board the U.S. Navy float for the third annual Armed Forces Day River Parade May 17.

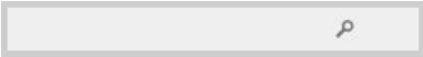
Capt. Gail Hathaway, commander of Navy Medicine Education and Training Command, was among the 10 Sailors ranging in rank from petty officer 3rd class to captain who were honored by the San Antonio public, by community and business leaders, and a multitude of local elected officials.

"I continue to be amazed at how the city of San Antonio rolls out the red carpet," Hathaway said. "They truly appreciate the military, and that spirit is so evident by their actions."

The Navy float was one of approximately 25 floats representing all five military branches, veteran's organizations, local businesses and community groups. The small flat-hulled barges typically function as water taxis and tour boats and hold approximately 40 people.

On this day, they filled another role highlighted by red, white and blue patriotic decorations. Each float made its appearance on cue from under a small bridge, appearing in front of television cameras and a special VIP seating area filled by more than 300 junior enlisted personnel from the five military services. From there, the floats meandered their way along the San Antonio River Walk, a network of walkways along the banks of the San Antonio River where they were greeted by cheers, hand-written signs and parade goers photographing and taping the event with personal cell phone cameras.

"The parade was very well organized," said Personnel Specialist 1st Class Narce Sagovia from Navy Recruiting District San Antonio. "From the float, it was a fascinating view of the historical buildings. The people of San Antonio showed their big hearts by waving, smiling and holding homemade 'thank you' signs."



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San Antonio Sailors and the Navy Band's Washington, DC-based contemporary ensemble, the "Cruisers," on board the U.S. Navy float for the third annual Armed Forces Day River Parade May 17. (Photo courtesy of Navy Medicine Education and Training Command)

The parade was televised via syndication in over 50 markets across the U.S., on the Pentagon Channel, at Armed Forces Radio and Television Service (AFRTS) outlets overseas and via Closed Circuit Television (CCTV) systems on board Navy ships. The five military floats were decorated and provided by the Paseo Del Rio Association, which puts on the River Parade and 23 other River Walk events annually.

"It's my favorite event of the year," Paseo Del Rio Association Executive Director Nancy Hunt said of the Armed Forces Day River Parade. "It's our way of showing the military that we really appreciate them." Personally, it's been one of the most rewarding things I've ever done."

Command Master Chief (MCD/PJ/FMF/SW) Chris Angstead, NMETC command master chief, said Hunt's appreciation for the military represents the city as a whole. "The genuine appreciation and the comments from the public were an indescribable feeling," said Angstead, who was on board the Navy float. "It's no wonder why San Antonio carries the moniker Military City USA."

Like Angstead, Cmdr. Jerry Burke, operations manager for Naval Medical Research Unit San Antonio (NAMRU-SA), was overwhelmed by the public response to the parade.

"It was an absolute honor and privilege to represent NAMRU-SA and the Navy," Burke said. "The people of San Antonio are the absolute best. Their patriotism, support and enthusiasm are second to none. They have embraced the Navy as part of the community, and they show the same consistent support 365 days a year."

NMETC is the Navy's single point of accountability for formal medical education and training. NMETC is part of the Navy Medicine team, a global health care network of Navy medical professionals around the world who provide high-quality health care to eligible beneficiaries. NMETC personnel deploy and train those who deploy with Sailors and Marines worldwide, providing critical mission support aboard ships, in the air, under the sea and on the battlefield.



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